Blending Jazz, African, Greek Styles, Brooklyn Group Creates New Sounds

Brooklynites have a keen intuition for finding freshly eclectic combinations, whether in cuisine or music. Recognizing and seizing on this is **Richard Bennett,** Brooklyn Heights resident musician, and bandleader of Wildlife 2000 for over six years.

Bennett's group Wildlife 3000 reinvents the jazz piano trio with drastic rhythmic, tonal, timbra, and sartorial innovations. His compositions have been called "rhapsodic", "pulsating", and "instantly catchy" by the Village Voice. He adds Arabic keyboard and melodica to forge a unique soundscape. Trio partner **Paula Jeanine** is a percussionist who generates infectious rhythms on the congas, NoSet, and berimbau. The emergent sound, based in North African rhythms and hip-hop conga beats, energetically engages jazz, funk and Greek styles. Acoustic bassist **Gaku Takanashi's** deep groove and good humor round out Wildlife 3000. The trio improvises extravagantly and freely in performance.

Wildlife 3000 has already performed three times at BAMcafe (Brooklyn Academy of Music); and plays regularly in NYC, including Lincoln Center Out of Doors, and—for five years running—the annual gala for the Alvin Ailey Dance Company. The group has released one record on Oxygen Records, "Listen/In a Silent Way." They have received international acclaim in India, where this year alone, Richard Bennett and Paula Jeanine toured in a series of jazz duo concerts.

Also in 2002, Bennett played and taught at workshops conducted by choreographer Neta Pulvemacher in Israel. Other international tours teamed him up with the George Kilby Blues Band in England, Belgium and Holland (2001) and with the Ty Stephens Band for the King of Morocco at his summer palace in Agadir (2000); as well as with the Gnawa musicians of Essouira. Bennett has also performed in Japan and Korea as a member of various jazz and blues ensembles.

A published poet since the age of seven, Paula Jeanine is a versatile percussionist, playing a variety of exotic instruments, some of her own invention. Her lyrics are inspired by musical tours of Egypt, France and Morocco as well as her love of art and architecture. Ms. Jeanine is also a Billboard award-winning songwriter. She has toured internationally in India, Egypt, France, Switzerland and Morocco, where she performed for the king and played with the Tombouctou Gnawa Brotherhood. She is a musician-in-dance at both the Alvin Ailey and the Paul Taylor Schools.

This Saturday, Paula Jeanine's drum guru from Mumbai, Nandakumar will be joining the group for a show at Kavehaz, 123 Mercer Street between Spring and Prince Streets in Soho. Performers will be Richard Bennett on piano & melodica; Paula Jeanine on conga & berimbau; Nandakumar on mridangam (two-sided drum) & moorsingh (jews harp); and Matt Pavolka on bass. The ensemble will play a couple of ragas in the drum guru's honor, Lalit and Marwa, as well as some other avant-groove and post-jazz tunes. The show runs 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. There's no cover charge. For more information, contact mudbath@earthlink.net.